



CLERK, U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

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THE DATE OF ENTRY IS ON
THE COURT'S DOCKET

The following constitutes the ruling of the court and has the force and effect therein described.

Signed April 21, 2023


United States Bankruptcy Judge

**IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
DALLAS DIVISION**

IN RE:	§	
	§	
MELISSA JANE BOYCE,	§	CASE NO. 19-32270-SGJ-13
	§	
Debtor.	§	

**ORDER BARRING CONTINUING PRACTICE IN THE BANKRUPTCY COURTS
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
OF ATTORNEY MICHAEL PAUL WRIGHT**

It recently came to the court's attention, in the above-referenced case, that Debtor's counsel of record, Michael Paul Wright ("MP Wright"), moved to the state of California in or about September 2022 and has decided to stop practicing law.

The court first became aware of this on January 12, 2023, at a hearing on the above-referenced Debtor's motion to reinstate case (which was granted, after the court learned of a series of mistakes that were made). The court scheduled a follow up hearing for March 23, 2023

after the court, Chapter 13 trustee, and U.S. Trustee developed concerns about what MP Wright was doing to notify clients that he was ceasing to practice law and help them find substitute counsel. At that hearing (at which MP Wright appeared by video from California), the court ordered MP Wright to provide to the Chapter 13 Trustee and the U.S. Trustee, by April 3, 2023: (1) a list of all of MP Wright's active bankruptcy cases; (2) a list of all of MP Wright's bankruptcy cases closed without discharge since September 1, 2022; (3) copies of emails to, and replies from, clients with active cases regarding MP Wright's ceasing to practice law and providing a name for substitute counsel; and (4) paperwork showing MP Wright's current status of admission with the Illinois State Bar. See DE #66. With regard to the latter topic, MP Wright stated that he had only been licensed to practice law in the State of Illinois (although he was admitted to practice in the federal courts of the Northern District of Texas several years ago), and he thought the Illinois State Bar admission may have lapsed.

This court held a follow up status conference on April 13, 2023. MP Wright did not appear this time. The Chapter 13 Trustee represented that he had talked to MP Wright, and MP Wright indicated that he did not intend to appear. By this point in time, substitute counsel, Andrew Nichols ("A. Nichols") had moved to be Debtor's counsel in the above-referenced case, which this court approved. A. Nichols attended the April 13, 2023 hearing.

The Chapter 13 Trustee reported that MP Wright had submitted some information to him that was required by this court's prior Order [DE #66], but it was somewhat incomplete. The Chapter 13 Trustee cobbled together information and presented it in a report filed in this case at DE # 70. To summarize, there were 24 cases on which M.P. Wright was counsel (16 active and 8 that had been closed since September 1, 2022, without the debtor receiving a discharge, under circumstances where it is possible the debtor might have been entitled to get his/her case

reinstated and receive a discharge). Attorney A. Nichols represented that he had, by this point, substituted in to 12 of the active cases. Thus, 4 more needed substitute debtor's counsel as did the closed cases.

The Chapter 13 Trustee represented that he and the other Chapter 13 Trustees in the Northern District of Texas would work with the local Debtors' bar to find substitute counsel in the 4 active cases (in which A. Nichols had not substituted) and in the closed cases that needed them. The Chapter 13 Trustee has since reported that he has done so.

Additionally, this court will waive the fee for reopening any of the 8 cases that might need to be reopened.

One especially troubling fact has now surfaced. MP Wright sent the Chapter 13 Trustee and U.S. Trustee nothing regarding his current status with the Illinois State Bar. The Chapter 13 Trustee had done some preliminary investigations and had determined that MP Wright is no longer licensed to practice law. This court went online with the Illinois Attorney Registration & Disciplinary Commission of the Supreme Court of Illinois ("ARDC") and found a record that indicated for Michael Paul Wright (registered address MP Wright Law Group, PLLC, Dallas, Texas): **"Illinois Registration Status: Not authorized to practice law as attorney is not currently registered with the ARDC—Last Registered Year: 2020."**

It would be desirable to hear MP Wright's version on this. But since he chose not to appear at the April 13, 2023 hearing, of which he had full notice, nor send the information to the Chapter 13 Trustee and U.S. Trustee that the court ordered him to send, the court is left to assume that MP Wright has been practicing law in the Bankruptcy Courts for the Northern District of Texas in recent years while not licensed to practice law by the Highest Court of any particular State or the District of Columbia. Accordingly,

IT IS ORDERED that Attorney Michael Paul Wright is *barred* from appearing, practicing law, or in any way representing clients in the Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Texas unless and until a bankruptcy or district judge of this District, or other court of competent jurisdiction, revokes or reverses this order of disbarment.

END OF ORDER